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Testimony by Walter J. Gancarz, P.E.
Town Engineer, Cheshire
State Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
Wednesday, February 19, 2014
Legislative Office Building

Re: HB-5082 – AN ACT CONCERNING WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT DESIGN FLOW.

Honorable Committee Members, good day and thank you for allowing me to testify. My name is Walter J. Gancarz, I am the Town Engineer for the Town of Cheshire, was formerly on the Cheshire Water Pollution Control Authority, and have been in environmental consulting as a Professional Engineer for the past 37 years. I am here to speak in support of HB- 5082 which increases the calendar period used to determine when a wastewater treatment plant has reached 90% of its permitted capacity, and thereby triggers the need to initiate a Facilities Plan.

The Town of Cheshire is currently under construction for the upgrade to our Wastewater Treatment Plant at an estimated cost of $32.150 million, the largest capital expense incurred in our Town's history. This project was driven by two factors, 1) a Facilities Plan which was initiated when our rolling 6 month average flow exceeded 90% of our design flow; and 2) the need to meet the State's new phosphorous limit.

Cheshire, like almost every other community in Connecticut, is subject to Infiltration and Inflow into our sewerage system. This, as you are probably aware, is the leaking of clean water from precipitation events and high groundwater into the sanitary sewers. This typically is at its worst during the period of March through May of each year when snowmelt, rain, and groundwater are at their highest. In Cheshire's case, which has a permitted capacity of 4.0 million gallons per day (mgd), this can result in flows for a particularly wet month to average 5.0 mgd, while most other months are typically 2.2 to 2.4 mgd. So, in a year when we have several wet months in a row, the 6 month average can approach 3.6 mgd, which is 90% of the design flow and will require us to start a facilities Plan. However our 12 month average is far less, typically only 2.6 MGD or approximately 65% of our permitted capacity.

Since all wastewater treatment plants are typically designed to treat a maximum flow of approximately twice their average flow, which in Cheshire's

case means that we can operate at 7.75 MGD for periods of time and still meet our discharge limits, it is an unnecessary burden to begin the Facility Plan process when ample capacity exists at the plant. The costs of a Facilities Plan for a Town like Cheshire approach $500,000.

The other fact impacting this bill is that other communities, in our case our neighbor Wallingford, has been granted this 12 month average in their NPDES Permit, while we remain at the 6 month average. Since we discharge to the same watercourse, the Quinnipiac River, this would seem to be inequitable.

In conclusion, we believe the 6 month rolling average should be adjusted statewide to the 12 month rolling average, as it will still provide a reasonable trigger to initiate a review of a municipality's sewerage system before it becomes overloaded, but will avoid the financial impact on communities of conducting a Facilities Plan while there is still ample treatment capacity in their system. In addition, this would allow CT DEEP staff to concentrate on the more pressing needs of truly overloaded systems, and not burden those staff reviewing Facilities Plans which are not currently necessary.

Thank you for allowing me to testify before you, and I wish you well in your deliberations this legislative session.

Town Engineer 360 day average CWF